

Example Table 1: Needs and Asset Assessment Summary

Area	Key Findings	Gaps	Implications for Planning Goals	Guiding Questions	Example Data Source(s)
Broadband Infrastructure	82% of the region has access to terrestrial broadband at speeds of 100/20 or faster. Real and Kinney Counties are the least served, with 69% and 71% of locations having 100/20 terrestrial coverage respectively. Maverick, Val Verde, and Zavala Counties have about 90% coverage. 69% of the rural areas of the region have 100/20 terrestrial coverage, as compared to 98% of the urban areas. Rural areas in Dimmit County are about 50% covered by 100/20 terrestrial internet. Satellite internet has the ability to cover the entire region. There are 18 internet providers in the region, including one satellite provider. Providers include: Alenco Communications Inc, AT&T, BEC Fiber, Big Bend Telephone Company, Inc, Frontier, Hill Country Telecommunications, Lyte Fiber, LLC, Southwest Texas Communications,	Rural areas have less access to terrestrial service of 100/20 or faster than urban areas. Satellite providers offer fast speeds to these locations but with limited pricing options. Though we have a good understanding of the providers serving the region, all communities may benefit from a better understanding of the plans, speeds, and price points available to their residents.	Dimmit and Real Counties, the region's least-served rural areas, would benefit most from diverse connectivity options (satellite, fixed wireless, mobile, etc.), planning to expand terrestrial broadband, and/or initiatives to expand affordable satellite pricing tiers. Denser areas with more competition may benefit from initiatives to expand awareness of affordable service offerings.	• <i>Who is served by broadband?</i> • <i>What technology is offered?</i> • <i>Where is the service?</i> • <i>What providers operate in the region?</i> • <i>Where are the gaps?</i> • <i>What does this tell you about where you can have an impact through this program?</i>	• <i>BDO Broadband Development Map: View by Regional District.</i> • <i>FCC Broadband Map: https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home (download fixed broadband data by geography type)</i>

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	Spectrum, Starlink, T-Mobile, TPx Communications, Valley Telephone Cooperative Inc, Verizon, Vero Fiber, VTX Communications, LLC, Xfinity, Zayo Network Services, LLC				
Digital Opportunity Gaps	26% of households do not have an internet subscription of any type; 47% of households are not using internet at broadband speed; 39% of households do not have access to a desktop or laptop; and 29% of the population over 25 have not graduated high school.	While the region has moderate broadband coverage, almost half of the region is not using internet at broadband speeds, and a quarter of the region does not subscribe to home internet. In addition, over a third of the region does not have access to a desktop or laptop at home, and about a third have not graduated high school.	Programs that help households subscribe to home internet service or upgrade to faster speeds could increase broadband adoption region-wide. Expanding access to devices and digital literacy training would further support that adoption.	• <i>What digital access services do residents have access to in the region? (computers, training, discounted services)</i> • <i>Who is receiving services?</i> • <i>Where is the service?</i> • <i>Where are there gaps?</i> • <i>What does this tell you about where you can have an impact through this program?</i>	• <i>Microsoft Digital Equity Dashboard filtered to counties in the region.</i>
Demographic and Economic Data	The COG has a population of about 161,000 living in over 12,150 square miles (about the equivalent of the state of Maryland). Most of the population resides in Maverick, Val Verde and Uvalde Counties. Real and Kinney Counties are the least populous counties in the region. The region includes	The region has low population density across a wide geography and a wide span of characteristics. For example, Kinney County has the lowest population (around 3,100 residents) but some of the highest income in the region with a median income of \$70,000/year. In	The region has low population density across a wide geography. Despite a diversity of characteristics and needs across communities, many residents may qualify for discount internet service programs offered to low-income households, seniors, veterans, or other groups. Explore working with ISPs to expand such	• <i>Who lives here?</i> • <i>What are their economic backgrounds?</i> • <i>What does this tell you about where you can have an impact through this program?</i>	• MRGCOG Website • COG engagement • US Census Bureau Profiles by County. Example: https://data.census.gov/profile/Uvalde_County,_Texas?g=050XX00US48463

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	several colonias of 1,000 residents or fewer. The region has a poverty rate of about 22%, and a 10.5% unemployment rate. The median household income is about \$54,000/year. 17% of the population is over 65. Real and Kinney Counties have high concentrations of residents over age 65. About 6% of the region's residents are veterans. Kinney and Real Counties have the highest proportion of veterans in the region. 11% of the region's population under 65 has a disability. Dimmit and Kinney counties have the highest proportion of people with disabilities under 65 in the region. About 22% of residents under age 65 do not have health insurance.	contrast, Dimmit County has about 8,400 residents and the highest poverty rate in the region at 41%.	programs and drive awareness of them.		
Existing Resources and Assets	Existing working relationships with TXDOT and DPS on 911 Network connectivity. COG is exploring how to secure the 911 backup network.	There is no existing working group dedicated to advancing broadband access and adoption in the region. The inventory of digital opportunity service	The region may benefit from an inventory of digital access resources, and development of digital literacy and device distribution in counties where no programs exist.	• <i>Who is working on digital opportunity in the region?</i> • <i>What plans or documents already exist?</i> • <i>Who is providing services in the region? What resources do they provide?</i>	• <i>Internal COG conversations</i> • <i>Stakeholder and partner engagement</i> • <i>2023 Texas Digital Opportunity Hub</i>

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	Maverick County completed a community technology assessment in 2022 with suggested steps to close the digital divide. Kinney County, Nueces Canyon Consolidated Independent School District, the Community Council of South Central Texas, and South Texas Rural Health Services received funding from Methodist Healthcare Ministries to advance digital equity in 2023. Real County coordinates with utility companies to allow use of their rights of way to install fiber optic cable. In Maverick County, the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas has received funding to build a Private LTE Network using Federal TBCP Funds. Cotulla, Eagle Pass, and United Independent School Districts have a history of distributing devices to students. Eagle Pass Public Libraries offer computer access and digital navigation.	providers and resources available to residents is limited. There may be more programs providing digital literacy, device access, and other digital access services than identified to date.	An advisory group could inform plans to improve access to digital adoption across the region.	• <i>Where has coverage? Where are there gaps?</i> • <i>What does this tell you about where you can have an impact through this program?</i>	• <i>Texas Digital Opportunity Plan Appendix of Existing Plans</i>